

Foreign Minister Per Stig Møllers introduction to the report "Greenland Ice Sheet" at the side event on "Greenland Ice Sheet - Melting Snow and Ice: Calls for Action"

December 14, 2009.

It was thanks to the Arctic Council in 2004 and its report on "Arctic Climate Impact Assessment" that international attention was drawn to the important role of the Arctic in relation to climate change.

The Arctic Council has now presented a new report on the melting ice in Greenland and the Arctic area. This report forms part of a more comprehensive project by the Arctic Council called "Climate Change and the Cryosphere: Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic". This project will be finalized and presented in the spring of 2011.

The report on Greenland Ice Sheet is the first ever comprehensive compilation of all our knowledge regarding this giant piece of ice. It has been written by some of the world's leading experts in the field led by Professor Dorthe Dahl-

Jensen, and it is based on peer-reviewed publications and data, besides being subject to careful scientific scrutiny itself.

The Greenland ice sheet is gigantic. Who can imagine an ice cube, which is three million cubic kilometers? Such an enormous amount of ice has the potential to impact the global sea level. In fact, if the Greenland ice sheet were to melt all together, it could cause a global sea level rise of about 7 meters.

Imagine: 7 meters! Luckily, current projections tell us that it would take 3.000 years for the ice to melt completely. Fortunately, the projections are constantly being refined as we go along, because we keep expanding our knowledge about this crucial issue.

The risk of a devastating impact from a melting ice sheet caused by global warming requires us to seek a better understanding of the behavior of the ice sheet. We need more research into the various processes and dynamics of the ice sheet to further our knowledge and better estimate what is really going on and what the consequences will be.

However, in all modesty, I am not an expert on the dynamics of the ice sheet and how climate change will affect the Arctic area. It was the former British Prime Minister and conservative statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, who said that “to be conscious that you are ignorant of the facts is a great step to knowledge”. I agree with him, and I hope to gain more knowledge from what we are about to hear. Therefore, I will introduce someone who knows all the facts about the Greenland ice sheet. Professor Dorthe Dahl-Jensen. She is professor of ice physics at the Centre for Ice and Climate Department of the Niels Bohr Institute at University of Copenhagen. She has received numerous international awards for her research on the Greenland ice sheet. Professor Dahl-Jensen, the floor is yours.